CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.642
11 February 1993

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND FORTY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 11 February 1993, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Celso Luiz Nunes Amorim (Brazil)

GE.93-60241 (E)

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 642nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Kenya, Germany, Egypt, Mongolia, Ukraine, Belarus, Venezuela, Sweden and the Russian Federation. I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya, Ambassador Don Nanjira.

Mr. DON NANJIRA (Kenya): Mr. President, at the outset I would like to congratulate you most warmly on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament during its first working month of its 1993 session. You have greatly impressed my delegation with your diplomatic skills and knowledge of disarmament issues as well as the functioning of this Conference and I wish you continued success during your remaining term of office. I should also like to register my gratitude to you and those delegations that formally accorded me a very warm welcome when I assumed my functions in this Conference. I pledge to you, Mr. President, and to all other delegations, including the newly arrived colleagues, my determination to cooperate and work with all of you in our common endeavours.

I would be remiss if I did not congratulate my very, very old good friend - old not in age, but old in time - the Secretary-General of the Conference and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Ambassador Vicente Berasategui, whom I have known for many years dating back to the days and years when I used to attend the work of the then Committee on Disarmament. I wish him continued success in his important work. I extend my good wishes also to the other members of the secretariat of the Conference.

With the conclusion of the draft chemical weapons convention in 1992, this Conference has attained its zenith as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body. The Convention was opened for signature in Paris in January 1993, as we all know, and well over 100 countries attended the signing ceremony and actually signed the Convention, thereby reinforcing the fact that many countries have confidence in the functioning and results of this Conference, notwithstanding its limited membership of course. The chemical weapons Convention, once it achieves universal respect and membership, will finally close the sad chapter of the manufacture and use of chemical weapons in conflicts. This is indeed a major step in concerted international efforts to eliminate weapons of mass destruction and my Government, by signing the Convention, demonstrated its permanent policy of the total rejection of all weapons of mass destruction.

The international community cannot rest its case on the successful signing ceremony, however. There is still a lot of distance to be covered with regard to the total prohibition of another category of more hideous and abhorrent weapons of mass destruction, i.e. nuclear weapons. The changes on the international political scene have undoubtedly led to many achievements in the bilateral and multilateral interactions of States, and we cannot fail to hail the spirit of cooperation and confidence that prevails in our world

(Mr. Don Nanjira, Kenya)

today. The recent signing of the START II agreement between the United States of America and the Russian Federation was an important measure in the reduction of the cold war tensions, and in their place a new era seems to have started of resolving the consequences of the cold war period. We commend the two countries for having taken the courageous decision to further reduce their nuclear arsenals and we hope that the prevailing spirit will open a long and lasting avenue for nuclear disarmament involving not only those who possess these weapons but indeed also the international community as a whole.

The nuclear non-proliferation Treaty has successfully checked the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. In spite of its major imbalances, which have always been voiced, the Treaty continues to attract new States parties, including African States, and this clearly underlines the unpopularity of nuclear weapons. As far as the Kenya Government knows, there continues to be only five nuclear-weapon States. However, we cannot ignore the serious problems of ownership of nuclear weapons following the demise of the former Soviet Union. No effort should therefore be spared to preserve the existing status quo as the proliferation of such weapons could lead to regrettable consequences especially in areas where political tensions still remain very high.

In addressing the horizontal nuclear non-proliferation issue, one can never do justice to this important question without emphasizing the vertical non-proliferation of these weapons. The circumstances are ripe now for a build-down of nuclear arsenals with a view to their total elimination. The attraction of nuclear weapons will lose its appeal if all those States already possessing such weapons take convincing steps which will demonstrate that these weapons are not the monopoly of a few. Without doing so at the earliest opportunity, the 1995 Conference on the review and extension of the NPT could witness a polarization of views between the non-nuclear-weapon States and the nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty. In our view, the NPT did not permanently delineate the two categories of States parties to this Treaty, otherwise the relevant articles on nuclear disarmament would be without value. Furthermore, we have never subscribed to the idea that nuclear weapons are good for some and bad for others. We have always been convinced that they are bad for all. I should like to point out that the Kenya Government, like all other States parties, supports fully the extension of the Treaty, but we shall pay keen attention to all arguments advocating a limited or indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty. As I have already pointed out above, the NPT has witnessed the accession of additional States parties from Africa. This is a development that reinforces the rejection of nuclear weapons by numerous African States.

Circumstances appear ripe now for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone covering the whole of the African continent. In trying to achieve this objective, the experience of those who have successfully established such zones in their regions will be beneficial to African countries. We hope that when the process of implementing this objective commences, all States, including nuclear-weapon States, will support the African countries. I hope too this subject can gain greater attention in this Conference.

(Mr. Don Nanjira, Kenya)

The report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" is timely and deserves detailed examination, and I wish on behalf of this delegation to address myself to some of the issues raised in that report. The concepts of integration, globalization and revitalization as reflected in the said report require careful consideration. We share the view expressed in the report that global disarmament measures should be closely coordinated with efforts in other fields. The suggested link between disarmament and development should be amplified to underline that international peace and security will be unattainable if the socio-economic objectives of many developing countries remain unfulfilled as a result of continued over-expenditure of very scarce resources on various types of armaments. We feel that the time has come for a renewed look at the question of the relationship between disarmament and development, taking into account the vast changes that have taken place since 1987 when the International Conference on the Relationship between Disarmament and Development was held. My delegation would have wished that the report gave a more detailed treatment of this topic, to which we attach the greatest of importance. We want this item to be revitalized in this Conference, and my delegation will be presenting a proposal in due course on this very topic.

As is noted in the Secretary-General's report, the United Nations has gained vast experience in peace-keeping and peace-building operations in various parts of the world, including Africa, and this underlines the supremacy of the United Nations in facilitating the resolution of various conflicts. Of course we cannot downplay the importance of regional efforts in implementing the efforts of the United Nations.

The globalization of the disarmament process is now more important than it was in the past. A multilateral approach to disarmament has already been strengthened by regional and subregional disarmament initiatives. There are some regions where the prevailing political circumstances and mutual trust have led to impressive achievements in arms limitation and confidence-building measures. There are other regions, however, where political tensions and mutual suspicion have led to a deadly arms race. The difficult challenge then to the reinvigorated United Nations system and other international organizations, as stated in the Secretary-General's report, is to assist in the globalization of disarmament through encouragement of interregional interactions which will have to take into account the different history, culture and political dynamics of the various regions.

The Secretary-General stresses the need to build on the past achievements in the disarmament and arms control process, and this stress has the fullest support of the Kenyan delegation. As is noted in his report, there exists today an impressive number of global, regional and bilateral agreements, all of which were achieved during the cold war era. Taking into account the circumstances under which some of these global multilateral treaties were concluded, perhaps there is a need to improve some of these treaties which have serious loopholes, and here we have in mind the biological weapons Convention, which would be complemented with a verification regime, as has

(Mr. Don Nanjira, Kenya)

been pointed out in the past. We are of course aware that it is up to States parties to the various international agreements to decide on the types of improvements required to strengthen the treaties they are parties to.

I have already mentioned the Kenya Government's support for efforts aimed at the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We also support the principle of non-proliferation in general, but this should not be to the detriment of States genuinely desiring to acquire dual-use technologies for peaceful purposes. Nuclear disarmament is another topic we would have liked to see a more detailed treatment of in the Secretary-General's report. The report does, however, mention the need to have disarmament machinery that would be a departure from the framework established during the cold war. We agree with this approach and with the proposal to have greater Security Council involvement in disarmament matters, and in particular in the enforcement of non-proliferation measures. This enforcement should be perceived to be just and applied uniformly without departing from the mandate of the Security Council as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations, and it should not diminish the competence of other bodies that deal with disarmament issues.

We have taken note of the fact that the First Committee of the General Assembly, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament have undertaken efforts to respond to the new circumstances by adapting their structures, methods of work and functions to fit in with the new realities. Here in the Conference, consultations have indicated the need for this body to address its agenda and membership. We consider the decision by the Conference to establish subsidiary bodies on a nuclear test ban, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, negative security assurances and transparency in armaments as a response to the new realities. We hope that concrete progress will be achieved in the near future on all or some of these issues. We share the view that nuclear issues on the agenda of the Conference still remain priority issues. My delegation should take the liberty to discuss these important issues in the plenary and subsidiary bodies established to consider issues of the nuclear test ban and negative security assurances pending the final outcome of the consultations on the agenda of the Conference.

As to the membership of the Conference, we note that an increasing number of countries have applied for such membership and some of these countries have been waiting for many years for a decision on their applications. We are convinced the time has come to make a final decision on this matter and we shall participate in the envisaged consultations on it in an open and constructive spirit and we would support expansion of a limited nature that would not impair the efficient and effective functioning of the Conference as a single multilateral negotiating body in disarmament matters, but, as I have indicated above, we are ready to discuss this item constructively at any time that it is brought up for our deliberation.

(Mr. Don Nanjira, Kenya)

With the completion of the draft chemical weapons convention, the Conference vindicated itself as an effective multilateral negotiating vehicle, and we hope that with this new momentum and as it focuses more clearly on issues which hold a lot of promise for success, it will achieve even more impressive results. We are encouraged by the developments and hope that similar successes can occur in the other disarmament fields in the future.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Kenya for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to myself and also to Ambassador Berasategui. I now give the floor to the representative of Germany, Ambassador Hoffmann.

Mr. HOFFMANN (Germany): Today I would like to give a few comments on our second report, that is, on the CD reform, and this time I promise to be brief. It has already been stated here that we are in a decisive phase of our work. The consensus on the chemical weapons Convention has demonstrated to the world that the Conference on Disarmament measures up to its mandate of elaborating binding global arms control agreements. The smooth start of this year's substantive work also augurs well for the tasks ahead. We must devote our full attention to the new challenges before us in order to justify the confidence placed in us. The pragmatic and pertinent statements we have heard so far in the plenary meetings of this annual session bear out my optimism that we will succeed. It is clear to me from these statements that our shared objective is to concentrate on the priority issues on the international arms control agenda. At the same time, we must endorse the legitimacy of our forum, the Conference on Disarmament, by finding an appropriate solution to the question of expansion. Let me first comment on the question of our agenda.

To begin with, I would like to emphasize that the agenda question should be approached in a spirit of pragmatism and flexibility. This year's swift decision on the work of subsidiary bodies has been a telling example of how efficiently such a spirit can produce results acceptable to all. Our review of the agenda should lead to a result which allows for continuous adjustment of the agenda to the needs of a constantly changing world. I would like to suggest that neither the Final Document of the first SSOD nor our own rules of procedure stand in the way of such a flexible attitude. Rather the contrary seems to be the case: we are free to adopt each year a revised or even new agenda taking into account recommendations by the General Assembly, proposals made in our Conference, and decisions emanating from it. This seems to indicate that we should rather reassess our priorities each year than simply carry forward one "eternal" agenda from year to year as we have done in the past.

Regarding the substance of future yearly agendas, my Government's general point of departure will hardly be a surprise: arms control negotiations should not be considered as an end in themselves but as a means to further peace and security. Peace and security in the real world begins with preventing and solving conflicts, of which we see too many around us. If arms control and disarmament negotiations cannot contribute to preventing,

(Mr. Hoffmann, Germany)

mitigating or solving real conflicts in the real world, such negotiations will run the risk of failing the litmus test of legitimacy. In my plenary statement on 2 February, in the context of the Secretary-General's report on "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament", I submitted some ideas on how this conceptual starting-point might be translated into concrete agenda items.

Let me now turn to the question of membership in this forum - or, more precisely, the question of expansion of the CD, because it is only expansion that we are really considering. In the last 14 years, that is to say since it commenced work in its present form in 1979, the Conference's membership has not increased. It has even actually fallen due to various developments. One of these developments - German unification - has been very gratifying for my country. From a Geneva perspective, however, the actual shrinking of the CD membership has lent particular urgency to the search for a solution to the question of expansion, which has eluded us for too long.

Conceptually speaking, there seem to be four possible ways to solve the problem, which I would like to comment upon briefly. Firstly, we might in theory develop certain topical criteria in order to identify those countries that should participate in global disarmament and arms control negotiations. However, as already convincingly argued in the previous President's report of 8 December 1992, such an abstract discussion would hardly offer a practical way out. Secondly, the least complicated solution might seem to be to declare the Conference open-ended - to let every State participate whenever it deems it appropriate. This approach might lead more quickly to an expansion, but it would also make efforts for result-oriented negotiations under the consensus rule much more difficult. Thirdly, a political "expansion package", based on a mixture of political as well as geographical balance. This approach has worked in the past; it might work again. If it did, we should certainly make use of such a chance and manage the expansion accordingly.

However, we should not underestimate the difficulties in the process of brokering such a package. It will not be as easily attainable as in the past, since today's world is not as neatly partitioned any more, but has become a much more complex world. Fourthly, the opening of the Conference to all those who have a genuine interest in its proceedings. This would mean membership for all States which apply to join and are ready to participate in the work. Such an approach does not imply "uncontrolled growth" of the Conference. One week ago, Sir Michael Weston put forward some interesting proposals on how to manage applications in order to keep expansion limited. We could also think about procedural adjustments in order to ensure a smooth negotiating process and the Conference's effective functioning. Of course, I am not thinking here of relinquishing the rule of consensus, the basic principle of our work. I believe, however, that consensus should be reserved to decisions on results and not be allowed to block discussion.

(Mr. Hoffmann, Germany)

Germany's assessment of the membership question takes the political importance of the Conference's work as the point of departure: disarmament and arms control is a global concern of utmost importance. My Government would consider it unfortunate if countries which are really willing and ready to contribute to this endeavour were excluded from full participation in the only multilateral negotiating body. This is why, of the four concepts for expansion commented upon before, Germany prefers the last one.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Hoffmann for sharing his thoughts on these important matters with us. I am sure that the two special coordinators, who unfortunately are not present today, will get the message. I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt, Ambassador Zahran.

Mr. ZAHRAN (Egypt) (translated from Arabic): Mr. President, allow me first to express my satisfaction at seeing you presiding over the Conference on Disarmament with your well-known skill and efficiency, which enabled the Conference to agree on its agenda and programme of work for its 1993 session at quite an early stage of the session. I would like to express to Ambassador Servais of Belgium my heartfelt gratitude for the commendable efforts he made during his presidency of the CD. My gratitude also goes to the Secretary-General and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ambassador Vicente Berasategui, and his staff, whose efforts assisted us in expediting the proceedings of the CD. It is equally a source of pleasure for me to welcome our new colleagues who have recently taken their place around this table - Ambassador Hoffmann of Germany, Ambassador Boytha of Hungary, Ambassador Chandra of India, Ambassador Don Nanjira of Kenya and Ambassador Nordberg of Sweden. I wish all of them a successful mission and assure them of my full cooperation.

I take the floor today in order to lay before the Conference the views of my delegation on the report of the Secretary-General entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era". I would also like to touch upon the issue of the improved functioning of the Conference, in response to General Assembly decision 47/422. I am confident that these views together with those of other members of the Conference on Disarmament will be reflected faithfully in its report to the upcoming resumed session of the First Committee in New York next March.

Egypt will elaborate its national views in New York through a national paper which will give our views on the Secretary-General's report. However, I wish here to express some of our preliminary views in the course of the deliberations of the Conference on this issue and on the basis of General Assembly resolution 47/54 E. You will remember that in his statement before this Conference on 28 January 1993, the Foreign Minister of Egypt welcomed the report of the Secretary-General, and said: "The report makes a number of interesting proposals and suggestions, which Egypt will address in detail through the appropriate channels. I would like to highlight however that we fully support the conclusion reached that 'a globalization of the process of arms control and disarmament is now needed'. We believe that your

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

Conference in particular has an invaluable role to play in giving tangible expression to the thought, and hope to see an active role for your Conference in developing the disarmament agenda for the twenty-first century."

On this basis, Egypt is convinced that the approach adopted by the Secretary-General forms a firm starting-point from which progress in the field of disarmament can gain momentum. In this respect, we believe that the implementation of the recommendations contained in the 1978 Final Document of the special session devoted to disarmament, which formed an agenda for general and complete disarmament, is invaluable as it lays the ground for the realization on a practical level of the Secretary-General's proposals for integration, globalization and revitalization.

We still believe that the highest priority must be given to nuclear disarmament and the prevention of a nuclear arms race, in conformity with the United Nations Declaration on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear and Thermo-nuclear Weapons adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 1653 (XVI). It is also our firm view that non-nuclear-weapon States should be provided with necessary and sufficient guarantees against the use of this type of nuclear weapon in addition to those provided by Security Council resolution 255. We hope that the parties concerned will soon agree to a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. We believe that by choosing to address nuclear weapons as the first specific category of weapons in his report, the Secretary-General accurately reflected the priority that must be given to this issue.

With respect to chemical weapons, we fully share the Secretary-General's view that the chemical weapons Convention is an indispensable element in global efforts to deal effectively with weapons of mass destruction.

It must be emphasized, however, that having signed and ratified the NPT but not signed the chemical weapons Convention so far, we are not missing the opportunity to "rid, as a first step, the Middle East region from chemical weapons", but rather safeguarding our vital security interests, as one State in the region has not committed itself to acceding to the NPT. Our views on this subject are well known and have been stated most recently by the Foreign Minister of Egypt before the Conference on Disarmament on 28 January 1993. Let me only reiterate our firm commitment to the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, be they nuclear, chemical or biological.

On the issue of transparency, we once again agree with the Secretary-General when he states that, when properly applied, it can be conducive to confidence-building among States and helpful in alerting the global community to excessive accumulations of armaments. In our view, the expression "properly applied" means applied equally and without discrimination to all States, all regions and all categories of weapon, including weapons of mass destruction. It should also be applied to national production and stockpiles, whether the stockpiles are conventional armaments or weapons of mass destruction. Selectivity in applying transparency would be tantamount to discrimination and would be an exercise in futility.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

The United Nations, whose role and responsibilities in the promotion of disarmament need to be strengthened, must play its part in ensuring that the international disarmament agenda, at the top of which stand weapons of mass destruction and nuclear weapons in particular, is applied globally without exceptions or discrimination. The concept of security in the world we live in today is an indivisible whole. Disarmament and security are intrinsically linked, and therefore any imbalance at any of the three basic levels of security, national, regional or international, is bound to have adverse repercussions at the other two. Furthermore, adequate levels of social and economic development are essential for a stable security environment, particularly in the developing world. It is therefore of the utmost importance that more effort should be made to determine ways and means of channelling the savings achieved as a result of the implementation of disarmament agreements to finance development programmes in developing countries.

With regard to the section of the Secretary-General's report concerning the Conference on Disarmament, we fully agree that the time has come to take practical actions with regard to a number of issues which are facing the Conference. One of the proposals made by the Secretary-General in his report, namely that the Conference might focus its efforts on well-defined and urgent issues, is already being implemented. At its 1993 session the Conference decided to give attention to four specific issues for which ad hoc committees have been created, as follows: a nuclear test ban; the prevention of an arms race in outer space; negative security assurances; and transparency in armaments. With regard to the agenda of the Conference, we still maintain that priority must be given to all nuclear items. As stated earlier, we believe that it is no coincidence that the first specific category of weapons addressed by the Secretary-General in his report was nuclear weapons. This is a reflection of the determination of the international community, as the Secretary-General said in his report, to intensify disarmament efforts in this field, the nuclear field.

On the issue of coordination, we appreciate the Secretary-General's idea for increased coordination among the various bodies involved in the field of disarmament, particularly the Conference on Disarmament as the only negotiating body in the field of disarmament, on the one hand, and the United Nations Disarmament Commission as a deliberative organ on the other hand. It is an idea which deserves careful study. We have no doubt that complementarity and harmonization between the work of these two bodies would be most useful in the inter-sessional period prior to the submission of their respective reports to the General Assembly through its First Committee. Furthermore, and in connection with enhanced coordination, the Conference of Disarmament could benefit from the services of UNIDIR. Being based in Geneva, UNIDIR could, without losing its independence, render invaluable assistance to the Conference by studying certain fields and conducting research when requested to do so. This would facilitate and expedite the deliberations of the Conference in negotiating various disarmament instruments.

(Mr. Zahran, Egypt)

As far as the question of membership of the Conference on Disarmament is concerned, in accordance with resolution 47/54 E, we believe that the Conference should not be excluded from the process of democratization of international relations. States which are interested in becoming members of the Conference and which are in a position to contribute to its work should not be excluded, provided that equitable geographical balance is maintained in its membership.

Closely related to the question of membership is that of decision-making. We believe that if the Conference on Disarmament is to play a significant and effective role in the field of disarmament, we should consider the principle of consensus and whether it can be regarded as synonymous with unanimity, as is the view of some, or whether it is synonymous with the veto of the minority. We could also consider the possibility that decisions on procedural matters might be taken by a majority, as was said by the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, to whom we listened in the last meeting.

The PRESIDENT: I thank Ambassador Zahran for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Mongolia, Ambassador Yumjav.

Mr. YUMJAV (Mongolia): Mr. President, at the outset allow me to associate myself with those who have already congratulated you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. I am confident that your wide diplomatic experience and high competence will ensure the success of our work. A clear example of your efficient guidance of our deliberations is the smooth start of the business of the Conference, namely the establishment of the four ad hoc committees on such important items as NTB, prevention of an arms race in outer space, negative security assurances and transparency in armaments, without losing time on procedural debates. I would also like to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Michel Servais of Belgium, for his valuable contribution to our work during his presidency. My sincere thanks also go to the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, Ambassador Vicente Berasategui, and to his staff, for their important contribution to the cause of disarmament. Let me as well take this opportunity to welcome warmly our new colleagues, Ambassador Lanús of Argentina, Ambassador Hoffmann of Germany, Ambassador Boytha of Hungary, Ambassador Chandra of India, Ambassador Don Nanjira of Kenya, Ambassador Norberg of Sweden, and wish them every success in their new endeavours.

In my intervention today I wish to present the views of my Government on some issues raised by the Secretary-General in his report "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era", as well as on the question of the future of the CD. Mongolia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General as a timely call for the international community to appraise and revitalize the international disarmament process in the context of recent changes in the global security environment. It adequately supplements his

(Mr. Yumjav, Mongolia)

report entitled "An agenda for peace". Taken together, these two documents provide a broad conceptual framework to enhance the United Nations overall capabilities to maintain international peace and security.

The fundamental changes that have occurred in international relations brought along the collapse of the bi-polar structure of the world and helped to ease tensions in various troubled spots of the world. But the world today is still far from being a peaceful, just and secure place. Conflicts, tensions, mistrust and lack of respect for the rule of law and more importantly the underlying causes of their existence still persist in the world. As it is rightly pointed out in the report, "the shadows of the weaponry of mass destruction still loom large; the threat of weapons proliferation - be it nuclear, chemical or conventional - still exists; the trade in weapons is again gaining momentum; and military expenditures in many parts of the world are still far too excessive in relation to unmet human needs" (para. 9). The cold war may be over but the weapons and armaments are still here and the goals of their eradication are still to be achieved.

We subscribe to the main thrust of the report embodied in the intertwined concepts of integration, globalization and revitalization. Obviously the practical implementation of these concepts should be carefully thought of and agreed on. The Secretary-General's belief that disarmament efforts "should be closely coordinated with efforts in other fields and should be seen as part of the larger network of international cooperative behaviour ..." is fully shared (para. 10). While recognizing the close inter-correlation between disarmament and other political and economic issues, including the fundamental problem of development, it would also be useful to point out that due to the sensitive nature of matters discussed and complex technical factors involved, the disarmament process enjoys some relative autonomy and cannot be tied up with the discussion of other problems or artificial time-frames.

Mongolia shares the view that each and every State should be engaged in the process of disarmament and strive to make its contribution to its success. Mutually supplementary unilateral actions, bilateral agreements and multilateral arrangements at both global and regional level constitute a basic framework for the promotion of the globalization in disarmament affairs.

The regional approach to disarmament issues, balanced interrelationship between global, regional and subregional efforts are of great importance as well. We support the identification by the Secretary-General of the questions of conventional armaments and confidence-building measures as important items on the regional and subregional disarmament agenda.

It is true that disarmament is every State's business, but it is equally true that some States bear particularly enhanced responsibilities in making the world a less armed and safer world. In this regard Mongolia welcomes the ongoing process of bilateral nuclear arms reduction, anticipates further achievements in this field and expects other nuclear-weapon Powers to join the process.

(Mr. Yumjav, Mongolia)

In our view, the building of a new international security system merits closer examination on the basis of existing mechanisms in the area of international peace and security. We fully concur with the Secretary-General's view that the existing system of disarmament agreements and treaties provide "a solid foundation to build upon now that the conditions for progress in this field have been enhanced" (para. 20).

Mongolia supports in principle the main priorities in the field of disarmament set forth in the Secretary-General's report. Now the chemical weapons Convention, an important milestone in the global disarmament process, is finally concluded. We believe that efforts of the international community should be concentrated on such issues as NTB, non-proliferation of weapons, especially nuclear weapons, negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States, conventional armaments and confidence-building measures.

We are of the opinion that despite some of its "contentious aspects" the non-proliferation Treaty is the cornerstone of the existing non-proliferation regime and therefore its verification and safeguard arrangements need to be strengthened. At its 1995 review conference the NPT should be extended indefinitely. We are convinced that all States should adhere to the Treaty.

Transparency in armaments and the regulation of arms transfers are important issues in facilitating non-proliferation. In this context we welcome the Secretary-General's intention to do everything in the Organization's competence to make the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms an efficient and successful service for Member States.

The section devoted to conversion highlights some of the so-called post-disarmament problems which clearly deserve the special attention of the international community. The decision to establish an interdepartmental task force at the United Nations designed to help provide Member States with political, technical and economic advice on various aspects involved in the transition to a post-disarmament world is a highly commendable development.

The reassessment and possible adjustment of the existing United Nations disarmament framework to the new realities and priorities as suggested in paragraph 43 necessarily requires a clear and agreed definition of these new realities and priorities. In general, the United Nations disarmament machinery works and produces results. The introduction of changes in the United Nations disarmament machinery should be a matter of careful consideration in various organs concerned.

Proper acknowledgement should be given to the sustained efforts by both the Disarmament Commission and the First Committee to rationalize and streamline their respective procedures and work, as well as a decision of the Conference on Disarmament to review its agenda, membership and methods of work.

(Mr. Yumjav, Mongolia)

I will now turn to the question of the future of the CD, in particular, the issues of its membership and agenda. Mongolia firmly believes that the status of the CD should remain as a single multilateral negotiating body on disarmament. The successful conclusion of the chemical weapons Convention has once again proved the efficacy of the CD, as well as the importance of its further existence. At the same time, we are for the improved and effective functioning of the CD, including its membership and agenda, taking into account the radical changes which have occurred in international relations in recent years.

My delegation shares the view that the CD still retains the structure and agenda of the cold war era. Therefore, we subscribe to the United Nations Secretary-General's proposal that a comprehensive approach is needed to address the structure, functions, methods of work and working agenda of the CD. Moreover, members and non-members of the Conference who participated in the consultations which have so far been carried out have also shown wide recognition of the immediate solution to these problems, in particular membership in the CD. We feel that the composition of the CD should be realistic and balanced, owing to its negotiating character. The chemical weapons Convention has demonstrated that it is quite possible to produce an agreement of a global nature, even within the present structure of the CD. For that reason, my delegation is not in favour of the excessive expansion of CD membership. Such expansion, in our view, could lead to the undermining of the rule of consensus, and thus the efficiency of the Conference. However, we consider that the aspirations of those who wish to make a contribution to the work of the Conference should be duly recognized. Consequently, the Mongolian delegation is in favour of expanding the present CD by approximately 20 members. I feel this is a reasonable approach, as the expanded CD would then comprise about 60 members - or a third of the entire United Nations membership.

Turning back to the rule of consensus, I would like to underscore that this is a key element in a multilateral negotiating body, such as the CD. The CD conducts its deliberations by consensus, thus providing a mechanism to protect national security interests. That is why we are for preserving that rule.

In spite of the fact that the existing groupings of the CD do not fully correspond to today's realities, in our view, political and geographical balance in the CD has not lost its significance. In order to produce a global security agreement, it is extremely important to consolidate the interests of both big and small States, whether or not they possess nuclear weapons, as well as those of regions and subregions. Therefore, we do not wish to make the CD "a club of the powerful", since the arms race threatens the security of all nations, including small ones. Mongolia is convinced that, notwithstanding the specific problems related to the current lack of necessary human and financial resources, the continued participation of relatively small States in the work of the CD is vital to ensure the balanced representation of the world in this single negotiating body.

(Mr. Yumjav, Mongolia)

The Mongolian delegations supports the United Nations Secretary-General's view that the efforts of the CD might be focused on well-defined and urgent issues. I am convinced that in coming years the priority agenda items in the CD will be NTB, negative security assurances, transparency in armaments and outer space. In our view, another pressing issue to be addressed in the CD is non-proliferation in all its dimensions. We believe that such important issues as regional disarmament and confidence-building measures should also be included in the agenda of the Conference. My delegation has no objection that certain questions on the present agenda of the CD be merged and restructured, as suggested, for example, by our Swedish colleague.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mongolia for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of Ukraine, Ambassador Sliptchenko.

Mr. SLIPTCHENKO (Ukraine) (translated from Russian): Mr. President, it is a great pleasure for me, speaking for the first time in this extremely important organ of international cooperation, to congratulate you on behalf of the delegation of Ukraine, on the excellent job that you have done in fulfilling the difficult tasks of being President during such an arduous period of work of this session. Allow me also to express the hope that, under your leadership, our joint work will be marked by a major contribution to the historic process of limiting and reducing armaments and disarmament, for which today there is a fundamentally new and favourable opportunity.

It is a particular pleasure for me to emphasize this aspect since both before it recently won its independence and since then, my country has proclaimed for all to hear the achievement of neutral and non-nuclear status as its highest political goal. And not only because since then Ukraine has in the most active way been moving towards the achievement of that goal and has constructively participated in all negotiating machinery in this field. I am also pleased to speak of this because nobody today can accuse us of not undertaking all the necessary practical measures deriving from the appropriate agreements. Suffice it to recall in this connection the early withdrawal from the Ukraine of the entire arsenal of tactical nuclear missiles for subsequent dismantling and destruction. Today we are talking about the next step, ratification of the Treaty on the limitation and reduction of strategic offensive arms and the Lisbon Protocol thereto so that, by assuming all the obligations deriving from them, we can rid ourselves completely of all types of nuclear weapons.

There is no need to refer once again to the tremendous importance and international significance of this step by a State which, as one of the official successor States to the former USSR, has assumed its share of responsibility for the third largest nuclear potential in the world today. Perhaps it might seem the simplest of decisions if we simply renounced such responsibility and shifted it to someone else. However, in our view, that would be unlikely to help strengthen stability in the world and achieve the goal which we have set ourselves (and I particularly wish to emphasize this

(Mr. Sliptchenko, Ukraine)

aspect - that we did so ourselves, voluntarily): not just achieving a reduction, even a large reduction, in our nuclear arsenal, but ensuring its complete and irreversible destruction.

The political leaders and the parliament of Ukraine, fully realizing their historic responsibility to mankind and our own people, are taking a very serious approach to the question of the ratification of the START Treaty and the Protocol, as well as subsequent accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, while trying to ensure that proper account is taken of all the related international and national factors. Unfortunately this seriousness and sense of responsibility in our approach is not always understood by our partners. In this connection, it is a particular honour for me today to present as an official document of the Conference the text of a recent statement delivered by the President of Ukraine at the World Economic Forum in Davos on "How to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons", which contains a detailed explanation of Ukraine's position. I would ask you, Sir, to take the necessary steps to ensure that this document is circulated during today's meeting.

As it is clear from this statement - and incidentally this has already been noted more than once, inter alia, at the highest level - Ukraine's position in this matter is clear and unambiguous. The President of Ukraine, believing that ratification of the START Treaty and accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons are in the highest interests of the State, has sent a proposal along these lines to Parliament, where intensive hearings on this matter are now taking place. That this aspect is complex and has many aspects is shown by the fact that in this connection Parliament has set up a whole range of groups of experts to deal with the military-political aspects of nuclear disarmament, the political-legal questions of destroying nuclear weapons, scientific and technical problems of nuclear disarmament, financial and economic problems of disarmament, problems of environmental security, and social and psychological problems facing military personnel from missile units. Their activities are coordinated by a special working group of deputies. Last week plenary sessions of the seventh session of Parliament began. Its programme of work officially includes the question of the ratification of the START 1 Treaty. The deputies are considering all necessary documents, analysing the domestic and foreign situation and financial problems and giving particular attention to questions related to the provision of security guarantees to Ukraine.

A few days ago the first round of talks took place between the delegations of Ukraine and the Russian Federation with a view to settling all questions related to ratification of the START Treaty and also ensuring the nuclear and environmental security of strategic nuclear forces in Russia and Ukraine. Progress has been achieved at the talks in preparing a draft agreement on carrying out surveillance of the operation of strategic nuclear force missile complexes from the point of view of guarantees and of design. It was agreed that ad hoc working groups will consider various scenarios for the dismantling, transport and destruction of nuclear warheads and elements of

(Mr. Sliptchenko, Ukraine)

missile complexes of the strategic nuclear forces deployed in Ukraine, including the question of reprocessing nuclear components. These talks will be continued.

In short, difficult and serious work is being done in keeping with the far-reaching and important nature of the instruments in question. Of course, this will take some time. Of course, the scale of the tasks confronting us in this area will require major - and not just moral, but also material - support by the international community. And here we are encouraged by the rather favourable response, including the response received at the Davos forum, concerning the idea that we have put forward for setting up a special international fund for nuclear disarmament. Thus - and here I venture to repeat myself - what is taking place now is a large-scale, serious operation taking into account the full measure of our responsibility and the whole range of accompanying domestic and international factors. However, as Ukrainian President L.M. Kravchuk emphasized on the eve of his recent official visit to Great Britain, there is now no reason to change the course we have chosen. Ukraine is striving to become a non-nuclear Power. In this effort we proceed from the principle that the world as a whole must move as soon as possible towards complete nuclear disarmament, and peoples must properly evaluate not only the search for approaches to specific reductions in national nuclear arsenals, but also the policies of those States that are voluntarily seeking a completely non-nuclear status.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Ukraine for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair. The document he referred to has already been circulated to this plenary. I now give the floor to the representative of Belarus, Ambassador Mardovitch.

Mr. MARDOVITCH (Belarus) (translated from Russian): First of all allow me to congratulate you warmly, Mr. President, on your election to the responsible post of President of the Conference. Your diplomatic skill and professionalism will certainly help you find necessary compromises and successfully complete the work of this session by adopting important decisions. We also express our gratitude to the Secretary-General, Ambassador Berasategui, and his staff for the preparation of the session.

I would now like to inform the participants in this session of an extremely important event which has taken place in the life of Belarus, which the Foreign Ministry of the Republic notified to all embassies accredited to Minsk in a note dated 5 February of this year. That note reads:

> "On 4 February 1993 the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus ratified the Treaty of 31 July 1991 between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms and the Protocol thereto signed in Lisbon on 25 May 1992, and also took a decision concerning accession by the Republic of Belarus to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State.

(Mr. Mardovitch, Belarus)

"These decisions were adopted as the expression of the consistent policy of the Republic of Belarus aimed at achieving the status of a non-nuclear and neutral State. For the first time in the history of the international community a sovereign State has voluntarily renounced the possibility of actual possession of nuclear arms. In taking this unprecedented step, the Republic of Belarus expects that the world community will support its peace-loving policy and its desire to make a meaningful contribution to strengthening European and global security.

"Of all the successor States to the former USSR as regards the START Treaty, Belarus is the first and only country to have stated its readiness to implement in full its obligations under the Lisbon Protocol. The fact that Belarus has ratified these treaties without any conditions or reservations has once again demonstrated the consistent and constructive nature of its foreign policy.

"The voting in the Supreme Soviet of Belarus proves that the policy of seeking neutral and non-nuclear status is supported by parliamentarians of all factions. The decision on ratifying the Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol was adopted virtually unanimously (one deputy voted against).

"The Republic of Belarus expects that its attitude towards nuclear disarmament issues will be duly appreciated by the international community, and it has the right to count on all-round financial assistance in dealing with the entire range of questions pertaining to the practical realization of the obligations it has assumed under treaties, as well as in effecting the conversion of military industries and modernization of technologies."

Mr. President, I would ask you to consider this statement by the Belarusian Foreign Ministry as an official document of this session of the Conference on Disarmament.

We view the decisions taken by the Supreme Soviet of Belarus not as a simple act or as a "moment of truth" but rather as a goal which has emerged from the depths of the consciousness of the Belarusian people during its tragic history. The movement towards neutrality and non-nuclear status in our view is a process of strengthening the independence and sovereignty of Belarus. The Republic of Belarus has been recognized by more than 100 States around the world, and diplomatic relations have been established with more than 60 of them. Our State has become a full-fledged participant in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and a member of the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other international financial institutions, and serves as host to a department of UNDP. All tactical nuclear weapons have been withdrawn from Belarusian territory. In addition, Belarus has undertaken to withdraw strategic weapons over a period of seven years. It may be that this will take place even sooner. We have distanced ourselves from participation in military and military-political

(Mr. Mardovitch, Belarus)

alliances and blocs. All of this is creating a sort of springboard, a basis for the actual implementation of the constitutional principles of neutrality and non-nuclear status.

At the same time, I would like to draw attention to the following problems. First, an attitude of comprehension is needed to the fact that the safety of nuclear weapons will cause a problem for as long as they remain on Belarusian territory. Secondly, ways and means must be found to increase the allocations under the Nunn-Lugar Act to seek other sources of finance for programmes for monitoring radiation levels, and the purchase of equipment and supplies used for accidents and emergencies. Thirdly, provision must be made for the possibility of allocating funds for administrative and technical measures to prevent the illegal export of uranium and the unauthorized spread of sensitive technologies transiting the territory of Belarus, as well as the need to establish special technical equipment at border crossings and customs posts in the Republic of Belarus. Fourthly, provision must be made for the possibility of providing assistance for retraining and social adaption of military personnel in strategic units which remain on Belarusian territory after the withdrawal of the nuclear and strategic forces of the former USSR. Fifthly, it must be borne in mind that Belarus expects its share of the proceeds from any sale of uranium removed from nuclear warheads. It is important to note that the Republic of Belarus is not seeking physical possession of fissionable materials but simply fair financial compensation. Sixthly, it must be remembered that Belarus, having embarked on the difficult path towards neutrality and genuine freedom from nuclear weapons, is interested in obtaining additional security guarantees from the nuclear Powers.

As it moves towards a better future, the Republic of Belarus is deliberately shedding the layers of the past, leaving behind the burden of old stereotypes and prejudices which have not stood the test of time. We face with confidence the opportunities which are opening up, and will contribute to ensuring international security and fostering the constructive efforts of the international community.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Belarus for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. The secretariat has also received the communication referred to by the Ambassador of Belarus, and it will be circulated as soon as possible.

(continued in Spanish)

I have pleasure in giving the floor to Ambassador Arteaga of Venezuela.

Mr. ARTEAGA (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): We convey our sincere congratulations to you, Mr. President, and our admiration at the skilful and effective way in which you have conducted the work of the Conference on Disarmament, which has facilitated the achievement of very expeditious agreements in the organization of our work, so that we truly congratulate you. We also express our gratitude to the previous President, Ambassador Michel Servais of Belgium. We welcome the new ambassadors who have joined the work of the Conference and we also convey our congratulations to Ambassador Vicente Berasategui on his efficient performance at the helm of the secretariat.

The end of the cold war has paved the way for the adoption of new approaches aimed at comprehensively coming to grips with the old and new problems facing the international community. The encouraging panorama that seemed to mark the beginnings of a new era has been clouded by the appearance of some areas of conflict, whose manifestations tend to reflect the complexities and difficulties which we must overcome in shaping a new system of international relations. The present international circumstances underline the need to adopt an integral approach to the difficulties linked to peace and well-being. A world in which over half the population lives in poverty and a minority enjoys high standards of living can be neither stable nor safe; stability must not be interpreted as a form of stagnation or the consolidation of a problem-ridden world order. An evolving world should be open to the influence of political wisdom and systematic respect for international law.

In the light of the changes that have occurred in recent years, we have been listening to ideas and reflections on the role to be played by the Conference on Disarmament in this post-cold-war era. Some sceptics have cast doubt on the importance of this body as a multilateral disarmament forum, on the grounds that disarmament constitutes a process related to bipolarity, whose significance has diminished in view of the need to tackle more urgent tasks; the dangers inherent in the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the excessive build-up of conventional armaments negate this type of argument and conjecture. The adoption of the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons has once again stressed the importance of this Conference.

We should like to refer to the report of the Secretary-General on "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" (A/C.1/47/7). The report by Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali is of clear interest as it contains a number of ideas which Venezuela shares in general terms. Within this new approach the Secretary-General works with three concepts in dealing with this item - integration, globalization and revitalization. In respect of integration, while it is true, as the Secretary-General says, that "the connections which exist between disarmament and arms regulation on the one hand, and the political processes - in peace-keeping operations and consolidation of peace - that shape international behaviour are crucial to progress both in the field of disarmament and in the creation of a new system of international security", it is no less true that the formulation of this idea prompts doubts in our mind as to its clarity in view of the fact that disarmament, because of its own particular characteristics, requires genuine

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

and specialized machinery that cannot be applied in a similar and automatic way to processes related to peace-keeping operations, and vice versa. Truly, globalization is a concept for which the vast majority of countries have been struggling, since matters pertaining to international peace and security concern us all. Hence we remain convinced that the multilateral approach in consideration of disarmament should be the main pillar of our task, as it contains three principles of great importance: indivisibility, non-discrimination and broad reciprocity.

Our delegation recognizes the significance of the signature of bilateral agreements on the reduction of strategic arms and the adoption of unilateral measures recently; none the less we believe that the policy of arms control in more favourable circumstances for cooperation and dialogue should not replace disarmament as a means of strengthening peace. While agreeing that it is necessary to avoid handling disarmament matters in a compartmentalized manner, we also continue to believe that the paramount responsibility in the adoption of concrete disarmament measures continues to fall on the main military powers; the appropriateness of dealing with urgent issues in the sphere of disarmament should not lead us to avoid efforts to promote the elimination of certain categories of weapons of mass destruction such as nuclear weapons, and negotiations on an agreement for a total nuclear test ban.

There is no doubt that, within the context of globalization, Latin America attaches special importance to regional security agreements. It should be emphasized that in our region we adopted specific measures in favour of non-proliferation many years ago, including of course the Treaty of Tlatelolco and more recently our accession to the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons and its early entry into force. We hope it will turn our region into the first region free of weapons of mass destruction. I also consider it appropriate to emphasize the readiness of Argentina, Brazil and Chile to make an immediate contribution to the full entry into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

In connection with the concept of revitalization we agree with the Secretary-General that within the context of this new era the recently concluded treaties should not constitute the epilogue to the efforts of the international community in favour of disarmament. On the contrary - they should be an encouragement to continued efforts to eradicate the causes feeding security dilemmas.

Certainly the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has become a matter of great concern. Its handling requires the application of a two-dimensional approach combining the effective adoption of disarmament measures and the use of diplomacy in the broad sense of the term, through the holding of effective negotiations. Along these lines we consider that the adoption of an agreement on the prohibition of nuclear testing would have positive effects for the maintenance of international security. In view of the changes that have occurred in the international political scene, it is essential to discard perceptions linked to bipolarity; technical arguments

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

cannot continue to be used to justify nuclear testing. In any event we cannot fail to refer with satisfaction to the nuclear moratoriums declared by various Powers.

The extension of the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty will obviously depend on specific progress made on the question of nuclear testing. The establishment of a comprehensive regime in this sphere will contribute to the strengthening of the NPT. Venezuela believes that the idea of indefinite and unconditional extension of the NPT could perhaps undermine its foundations; hence we consider that its strengthening will have to be based on the need to adopt and especially put into practice reciprocal, non-discriminatory principles and the universal application of its provisions.

Although it is true that some partial measures (unilateral, bilateral, regional) could contribute to mitigating the risks of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, they should be accompanied by political measures designed to encourage universal accession to existing multilateral instruments such as the NPT, the Convention on bacteriological weapons, the entry into force of the Convention on chemical weapons. Concurrently with these global measures, it would be necessary to adopt a convention to prohibit the production and monitor the storage of fissionable materials - plutonium - and strengthen the IAEA system of safeguards as well as its inspection machinery. Likewise we encourage the nuclear-weapon States to continue negotiations in good faith in conformity with the provisions of the NPT.

As a consequence of the Gulf crisis it was demonstrated that the excessive build-up of armaments has disruptive effects for international security. The establishment of a United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is a positive measure in confidence-building. However, we believe that given the responsibility devolving on the main nuclear Powers, in this process we should also take into account the role played by producers and suppliers as well as the appropriateness of imposing restrictions upon exporters; likewise, in an effort to reflect a criterion of extensiveness, non-discrimination and equity it is vital to incorporate in the Register other categories of weapon such as weapons of mass destruction and other weapons with destabilizing characteristics. Of course, we hope that the developed countries will be the first to transmit the required information and thus set us a good example.

As to the need to revitalize the machinery and institutions in the field of disarmament, Venezuela is convinced that the Conference should maintain its character as a multilateral negotiating forum; in the name of pragmatism we should not sacrifice principles and rules that are in line with the tasks of the Conference. The effectiveness of the CD should be directed towards achieving a balance between old and new challenges. Of course, in shaping a new stage in international relations the Conference must respond to the expectations of peace and security the international community has vested in it. The other established disarmament forums such as the First Committee and the Disarmament Commission should preserve their original mandates on the basis of rationalization criteria.

(Mr. Arteaga, Venezuela)

Our delegation is of the view that the Conference, in the search for the definition of criteria relating to its membership, should, as a multilateral negotiating forum, opt for a limited expansion. We should avoid the Conference turning into a sort of General Assembly, which would hamper its effectiveness in carrying out the responsibilities or tasks assigned to it; in the definition of criteria we should prevent the creation of asymmetries in the future expansion. As regards the role that could be assumed by the Conference in overseeing multilateral disarmament treaties, this idea raises a degree of doubt because, as has already been stated, these treaties contain provision for machinery for this purpose, for instance the NPT and the IAEA safeguards system. Likewise, in raising this idea no account was taken of the limited nature of the membership of the CD; not all States parties to multilateral instruments of this nature are full members of the CD. For the rest, we agree with the role to be played by the Security Council in the enforcement of rules agreed in multilateral disarmament treaties, in conformity with the provisions of the United Nations Charter.

As we are convinced that the signature of the Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons does not represent the end of the story for the CD, we should combine our efforts to produce multilateral treaties and specific disarmament measures in keeping with the realities of a changing world; the years of confrontation and sterile dialogue are behind us.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Spanish): I thank the representative of Venezuela, Ambassador Horacio Arteaga, for his statement and for the very kind words addressed to me.

(continued in English)

I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Norberg.

Mr. NORBERG (Sweden): I have asked for the floor today to make some remarks in connection with the report of the Secretary-General on "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era" and the important question on the future of the Conference on Disarmament, including its composition and agenda. Much has already been said on these issues. As I can agree with many viewpoints expressed before, I will be brief.

My delegation welcomes the timely report of the Secretary-General. Sweden is in full agreement with the thrust of the observations and the ideas put forward in the report. The notions of integration and globalization should, in the new international security context, be trends generally acceptable to the international community. That seems also by and large to be the case. There also seems to be general agreement on the increased significance of the non-proliferation issues, both concerning weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons. It is a very valuable observation that corollary issues to disarmament, such as transparency and confidence-building measures, in the new international environment gain in significance compared with traditional disarmament and arms control issues.

(Mr. Norberg, Sweden)

The various organs of the United Nations have complementary roles to play in arms control and disarmament. Basically, in the view of my delegation, the present machinery serves its purposes rather well. However, we need to improve it and in certain respects taking into account the new situation.

The General Assembly through its First Committee is a forum for normative discussions and resolutions. It is at present involved in a process of considering its working methods. An urgent task would be to restructure and streamline the agenda of the Committee.

The working methods and agenda of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) have recently been reformed. Further steps should be taken to allow the Commission to focus more in depth on important items and submit concrete recommendations thereon. As a practical step to rationalize the functioning of the UNDC, and avoid duplication with the First Committee, the UNDC could consider suspending the practice of having a general exchange of views.

The Conference on Disarmament has beyond any doubt proved its usefulness through the completion of a chemical weapons convention. As was pointed out by my Minister for Foreign Affairs in this hall only one week ago, both the agenda and the composition of the Conference reflect the bipolar structure of the world of the cold war. The need for reform is obvious and, in the view of my delegation, an urgent matter.

On the part of my delegation it has earlier been suggested that the CD should be made open to all States which apply for membership. I note with satisfaction that this line of thought gradually seems to gain support. My distinguished British colleague expressed a short time ago in a plenary meeting his sympathy for this idea, and also pointed out various ways to achieve this without damaging the effectiveness of the CD, and today our distinguished German colleague also indicated sympathy for this approach. I agree with the view expressed by my British colleague that it would be ideal to solve the question of expansion first and then more in detail take up the question of the agenda. Even if the question of the agenda is also an urgent one, it would indeed be fair that new members could influence these deliberations. My delegation has earlier submitted concrete ideas about the structure of this new agenda. Let me just recall that it seems important to see to it that in the new security environment deliberations on confidence-building measures as well as regional security arrangements should also fit in with the future agenda.

It is of great value if the CD agrees on a common reply to the Chairman of the First Committee. Thus we should in this context try to concentrate on matters where there is a consensus within the CD. There is no point in enumerating different national views, as they are anyhow made known to the Secretary-General through the national replies.

(Mr. Norberg, Sweden)

The resumed session of the First Committee will be an important event, as during one week we will focus on comprehensive questions within the field of disarmament and on the disarmament machinery. Even if the CD is and should continue to be an independent body, we ought to take this opportunity to reconsider the place of the CD in the general context of handling security policy issues.

Mr. BERDENNIKOV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): The delegation of the Russian Federation has taken the floor today in order to welcome the adoption by the Parliament of the Republic of Belarus on 4 February of a decision concerning the ratification by Belarus of the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, START 1, including the Lisbon Protocol. Also of special importance is the decision taken by the Parliament of the Republic of Belarus concerning its accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear State. These decisions by the Belarusian Parliament, adopted without any reservations or conditions, undoubtedly bear witness to the great sense of responsibility with which the Republic of Belarus approaches the matter of compliance with its international obligations in the field of security and disarmament, the strengthening of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and the drastic reduction of nuclear stockpiles as a step towards their complete elimination. The Russian Federation stands ready to provide the Republic of Belarus with assistance as necessary in matters related to compliance by Belarus with its obligations under the above-mentioned agreements.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes my list of speakers for today. Does any other representative wish to take the floor at this stage? I do not see any.

May I now turn to another subject? The secretariat has circulated today the timetable of meetings to be held next week by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies. I should mention that there will be an addition to that timetable: subject to the approval of the programme of work by all the groups, the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space expects to have its first meeting on Tuesday, 16 February, at 3 p.m. If agreement is reached, we shall issue a revision of the timetable, adding that meeting. I do not see any objection.

As usual, the timetable is merely indicative and subject to change, if the need arises. In accordance with our practice, any informal open-ended consultations are not included, as they are scheduled depending on the progress achieved in our work. On that understanding, I suggest that we adopt the timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT: I wish to announce that the members of the Conference will hold an informal open-ended consultation in conference room I, and I think we could productively start that immediately after this meeting, to discuss the papers circulated by the secretariat relating to our reports to

(The President)

the resumed session of the First Committee. I should like to inform you that the non-members participating in the work of the Conference are also invited to attend the consultation.

That concludes our work for today, but before I adjourn this plenary meeting, I wish to say a few words at the end of the presidency of Brazil.

The responsibility of presiding over this august body fell upon me, by alphabetical determinism, at a delicate but I may also say interesting moment. The rapid and profound changes that have occurred on the international scene in the last three years have renewed the hopes for more effective action by the United Nations in the field of disarmament and international security. At the same time, the CD, after the successful conclusion of the negotiations on a chemical weapons Convention, is called to answer to the expectations of the international community in relation to other issues of the disarmament agenda. It also has to deal with pressures for reform and show its capacity to adapt to changing world circumstances without in any way compromising its identity and effectiveness, as the sole negotiating body for multilateral disarmament.

I am pleased to see that in these four weeks it was possible to create conditions to start working on substantive issues, and to make considerable progress in organizational matters. Productive work has also been done concerning the comments requested from the CD on the United Nations Secretary-General's report on "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era", as well as on questions relating to its functioning, agenda and membership. I hope I will be able to hand to my successor, if not fully agreed drafts, at least a basis for these reports.

The credit for whatever results were achieved must of course go to the members of the CD. Without the good will and sense of purpose displayed by all delegations, little or no progress would have been possible. And my successor, as well as his own successor in the presidency, might still be faced, as in previous years, with the task of discussing the setting up of groups and the establishment of mandates. That would have been very detrimental to our work and to the image of the CD itself. I am glad we were able to avoid this less promising scenario. My task as President was made significantly lighter in view of the work done by my predecessor Ambassador Servais of Belgium, to whom I wish to pay tribute here. I must also thank the Secretary-General of the Conference, Ambassador Berasategui, whose well-known skills and indefatigable disposition to work creatively contributed to solve many problems. I also thank other members of the staff who, behind the curtains, helped Ambassador Berasategui and indirectly myself.

I hope this has been a good and smooth start. I wish luck to my successor, Mr. Deyanov of Bulgaria. I am certain that with your cooperation the CD will witness further progress in the substantive work which has already begun.

The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Thursday, 18 February, at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.